

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-05 IO-10 JUSE-00

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-04 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05

OES-03 OMB-01 EB-07 FAA-00 DOTE-00 SCS-03 SCA-01

COME-00 L-02 CAB-02 EUR-12 H-01 MC-01 AID-05 AGR-05

/102 W

----- 083076

R 222345Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4916

INFO DEA HQS WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 9856

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR MX

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE ON NARCOTICS CONTROL ACTIVITIES:
MEXICAN PROGRAM

REF: A. STATE 213134 B. MEXICO A-434 C. MEXICO 9459 C. STATE 249770

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM CHARGE

DEA HQS FOR EOI CUSACK

1. SUMMARY: WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND TO
REF A, CONCERNING THE NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM, IN THE
KNOWLEDGE THAT OUR COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS WILL RECEIVE
HIGH LEVEL AND IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. AS YOU KNOW, PRESIDENT
FORD AND PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA DISCUSSED THE
NARCOTICS PROGRAM AT SOME LENGTH DURING THEIR RECENT
BORDER MEETING, THUS EMPHASIZING THE URGENCY AND SERIOUS-
NESS OF WHAT YOU COMMUNICATED IN THE REFERENCED CABLE.
END SUMMARY.

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2. IN CONSIDERING THE ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM IN MEXICO,

WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT DESPITE THE GOOD EFFORTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES THE PROBLEM HAS WORSENERED IN THE LAST TWO YEARS: MEXICAN HEROIN HAS FILLED MUCH OF THE VACUUM LEFT IN THE US MARKET BY THE REDUCTION OF EUROPEAN SOURCE HEROIN; THE TRANSIT TRAFFIC IN COCAINE HAS INCREASED CONSIDERABLY THROUGH MEXICO TO THE US AND CANADA; AND OF COURSE MARIJUANA CONTINUES TO CROSS THE BORDER IN MULTI-TON LOTS. ONLY IN THE PILL TRAFFIC HAS THERE BEEN A NOTABLE REDUCTION EFFECTED, THANKS LARGELY TO JOINT ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS SUCH AS CENTAC IV. BUT WHILE THE OVERALL PROBLEM AT PRESENT REMAINS AS BAD OR WORSE, I BELIEVE WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THE BASIS FOR WHAT WE HOPE WILL PROVE TO BE, WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS, A DEFINITIVE TURN AROUND. THE GOM'S INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN IN NORTHWEST MEXICO IN 1973-1974 SERVED TO BRING LAW ENFORCEMENT TO HITHERTO IMMUNE AREAS AND DID ERADICATE HUGE AMOUNTS OF MARIJUANA AND POPPY. WE ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF PROVIDING MEXICO WITH AN AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC DETECTION SYSTEM, ADDITIONAL LARGE HELICOPTERS AND FORWARD BASES FROM WHICH TO OPERATE THEM. WITH THE EMPLOYMENT OF THESE NEW ELEMENTS IN THE CAMPAIGN TO BEGIN NEXT MONTH, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FULLY BELIEVES THAT HE CAN BEGIN TO EFFECT A REAL REDUCTION IN THE HEROIN FLOW FROM MEXICO TO THE US. WITH WHAT WE LEARN IN THE 1974-1975 CAMPAIGN, AND WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT ENABLING THE GOM TO CARRY THE WAR TO NEW POPPY AND MARIJUANA GROWING AREAS, I ALSO BELIEVE THAT FY 1976 WILL SEE AN IMPRESSIVE REDUCTION IN THE ILLEGAL PRODUCTION IN MEXICO. DEA, WITH THE GOM, WILL SHORTLY LAUNCH AN ALL-OUT CAMPAIGN ON MAJOR TRAFFICKERS; THIS, PLUS IMPROVED INTERDICTION TECHNIQUES, AND THE ERADICATION CAMPAIGN ALREADY MENTIONED, SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO AN IMPORTANT DECREASE IN THE ILLICIT TRAFFIC INTO THE US.

3. WE HAVE RECENTLY PRODUCED THE FY 1976 PROGRAM GUIDANCE FOR MEXICO (REF B). THIS REMAINS A DEFINITIVE AND UP-TO-DATE STATEMENT OF OUR GOALS AND PROGRAM IN MEXICO. THE ONLY CHANGES WE MIGHT SUGGEST ARE (A) CERTAIN ADDITIONS TO OR INCREASES IN THE FY 1976 FUNDING PROPOSALS (THESE ARE CURRENTLY BEING WORKED OUT WITH S/NM AND (B) AND
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EXPLORATION OF ADDITIONAL MEASURES WHICH MIGHT BE TAKEN ON THE DEMAND SIDE, SUCH AS FUNDING SOME NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS IN MEXICO AND PROVIDING ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT, TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. THESE POSSIBILITIES ARE BEING STUDIED AND DISCUSSED NOW AND WE ARE IN FREQUENT TOUCH WITH WASHINGTON ON THESE MATTERS.

4. IN GENERAL, WE SEE NO MAJOR PROBLEM AREAS IN THE MEXICAN PROGRAM WHICH ARE NOT BEING ADDRESSED. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EMBASSY, DEA AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE

NARCOTICS CONTROL COMMITTEE IS EXCELLENT.THERE ARE TWO ASPECTS OF WHICH THE DEPARTMENT UNDOUBTEDLY IS AWARE, BUT WHICH BEAR MENTION IN THE CONTEXT OF AN OVERALL ANALYSIS OF OUR PROGRAM:

A. THE NUMBER OF US CITIZENS ARRESTED ON NARCOTICS CHARGES IS INCREASING MONTHLY. THE US CITIZENS IN PRISON HERE ARE BECOMING MORE ORGANIZED AND VOCAL AND ARE INCREASINGLY ATTRACTING CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER ATTENTION IN THE US, WITH CONSEQUENT CRITICISMS OF THE EMBASSY, DEA AND THE USG.

B. THE NECESSARILY CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN DEA AND THEIR MEXICAN COUNTERPARTS, WHILE A VITAL ELEMENT OF OUR PROGRAM, DOES ENTAIL CERTAIN RISKS IN TERMS OF INJURY OR DEATH TO DEA PERSONNEL AS WELL AS POSSIBLY UNFAVORABLE PUBLICITY IN THE EVENT OF SERIOUS ACCIDENT OR EXPOSURE.

5. IN DISCUSSING WHAT MIGHT BE DONE NORTH OF THE BORDER TO IMPROVE THE PROGRAM (PARA 5 OF REF A), THE EMBASSY NARCOTICS CONTROL COMMITTEE DECIDED THAT THE MOST OBVIOUS NEED IS FOR BETTER CONTROL OF LIGHT AIRCRAFT AND SEABORNE TRAFFIC BETWEEN MEXICO AND THE US. RECOGNIZING THAT THIS IS HARDLY A NOVEL SUGGESTION, WE NONETHELESS WISH TO EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR TIGHTER CONTROLS, PARTICULARLY ON RENTAL AIRCRAFT. THIS PROBLEM HAS RECENTLY BEEN POINTED UP TO US BY THE MEXICAN SECRETARIAT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE WHICH HAS EXPRESSED ITS CONCERN OVER THE LARGE NUMBER OF UNMONITORED LIGHT AIRCRAFT FLIGHTS INTO MEXICO DAILY. THEIR PRIMARY CONCERN IS OF COURSE WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF CONTRABAND, PARTICULARLY FIREARMS, INTO MEXICO.
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BUT MANY OF THESE SAME AIRCRAFT CARRY NARCOTICS ON THE RETURN TRIP, SO THE TWO PROBLEMS ARE COMPLEMENTARY RATHER THAN COMPETITIVE. WE PLEAD FOR CLOSER SCRUTINY OF AND MORE ALERTNESS ON THE PART OF AIRCRAFT RENTAL AGENCIES IN THE US. A CIRCULAR NOTICE BY THE FAA SUCH AS THAT REQUESTED AND CONFIRMED BY REFS C AND D, RESPECTIVELY, WILL HELP IN PROTECTING THE INNOCENT AND WILL HAVE SOME DETERRENT EFFECT. BUT IT WILL NOT STOP THE PROFESSIONAL TRAFFICKER OR THE CORRUPT RENTAL AGENCY. IT MAY BE THAT NEW, TOUGHER LEGISLATION IS REQUIRED TO ENFORCE MORE EFFECTIVELY SANCTIONS AGAINST VIOLATORS OF RENTAL AGREEMENTS OR FAA REGULATIONS. THIS WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARD CURTAILING ILLICIT FLIGHTS OF CONTRABAND-CARRYING AIRCRAFT INTO AND FROM MEXICO.

6. THE ESSENCE OF OUR ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAM IN MEXICO IS PRAGMATISM AND FLEXIBILITY; AS NEW THOUGHTS OCCUR OR PROBLEMS ARISE WE SHALL BE QUICK TO ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, DRUG TRAFFIC, CITIZEN PROTECTION, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), ARRESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MEXICO09856
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740340-0088
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741120/aaaaaqvl.tel
Line Count: 170
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A. STATE 213134 B. MEXICO A-434 C. M, EXICO 9459 C. STATE 249770
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 SEP 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <14 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE ON NARCOTICS CONTROL ACTIVITIES: MEXICAN PROGRAM
TAGS: SNAR, MX, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005